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SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.—I.

THE MALWOOD EASY CHAIR.

Wood grown in the New Forest. A big, comfortable Arm-Chair, suitable for the cultivation of one's own fireside. This Chair has had many vicissitudes. Was finally sold at Derby in 1895 with a presentation set of china and a water-bottle. Now permanently at Malwood. It has a Welsh fringe.

AN UNFORTUNATE MORNING.

WITH the careful economy of the newly married, I had set aside a certain sum for my Christmas presents, arranging beforehand the exact amount I would expend on my wife, my relatives, the dear little GARWAY children, and others.

To flâneur down Bond Street, conscious of the agreeable power of giving immense pleasure to those one loves, by a few seasonable gifts, is a sensation of luxury. But things happened rather awkwardly.

In the palace of silver and leather, where I lingered looking for a suitable present for DOROTHY, I met a cigarette-case of such obvious suitability to myself, that not to order it—with my initials in plain, heavy silver-gilt—seemed almost a foolish extravagance. Again, at the jeweller's, where I sought for a single gem to sparkle in my wife's pretty hair, a certain pair of turquoise studs and a pin, of exquisite though severe workmanship, appealed, beyond resistance, to my sober, cultivated taste.

Searching for a "useful" present for a pet aunt of practical leanings, I found in the celebrated umbrella-shop a perfect little stick. It was neither too large nor too small. It was distinguished, but not eccentric; it seemed made for me, and I hoped it would accompany me on many a pleasant ramble.

I now rather hastily passed into a bookshop to get *Every Boy's Annual and Little Folks*. How pleasant it would be to see the bright eyes of the dear little GARWAYS become brighter still as they read the delightful stories and put their sticky fingers on the lovely pictures! Children always judge of artistic productions, when it is possible, by the sense of touch—sometimes even by that of taste, and there may be much to be said for their view. But in this too fascinating home of literature, ill-luck again pursued me. I am a bibliophile at moments, and the atmosphere of a library goes to my head and warps my

calmer judgment. Some exquisitely bound volumes of a favourite work, and a valuable first edition of another I had long wished to possess, forced themselves upon my notice. After all, some one else was sure to give the GARWAYS their picture-books!

When I got home I found that, though I had exceeded the sum put aside for that purpose, I had not bought a single present. I was ten pounds in debt, and the parlour-maid had to pay my cab. All this is caused by weak good-nature. It is a fault I must guard against.

DOGS AND THEIR DUTY.

(By Our Own Reporter.)

A MEETING was held, within the last week, at midnight, in the absence of the moon, to consider the recent speech of Mr. LONG about the muzzling order. The chair (a garden one) was taken by Mr. FOX TERRIER. The spot chosen for the gathering was a little-frequented square.

The chairman said that he had great pleasure in presiding on that occasion, as he felt his canine colleagues had a distinct grievance. Personally, he was little affected by the iniquitous muzzling order, as when he took the air it was in a carriage.

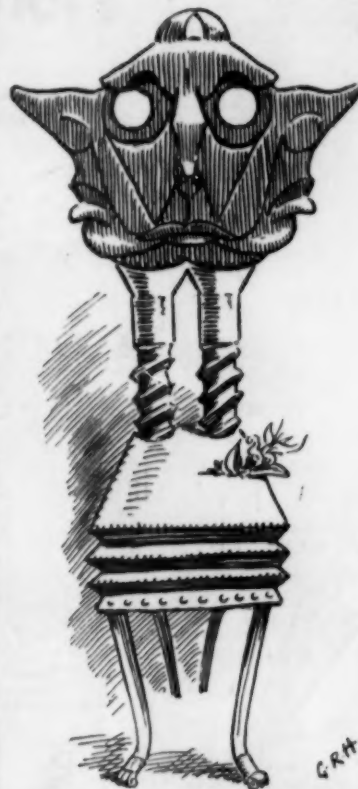
Mr. SHEEP DOG protested against "side." No one wanted to hear about Mr. FOX TERRIER's carriage-drives.

The chairman intended no offence. He only desired to say that he was acting unselfishly in the matter. He called upon Mr. POODLE to move the first resolution.

Mr. POODLE, at this appeal, begged to move "that it is the opinion of this meeting that the entire human race is becoming insane, and consequently, if the muzzle be necessary, it should be removed from the dog to be placed on the mouth of his so-called master." Statistics proved that man was rapidly becoming *non compos*. It really was too ridiculous that mad men



If Sir Edward Bradford cannot allow Cabs to have Foot-warmers, may we suggest that Constables on point duty have them? They would be much appreciated these cold days.



SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.—II.

THE "JO JO" EXPANDING CHAIR,

As worshipped in the savage dependencies of the Empire. A very elegant chair, constructed on screws (patent monopoly). Can also go higher. Now at the Colonial Office. [From the collection of the Marquis of SALISBURY.]

should interfere with sane dogs. He trusted that his proposal would be carried.

The discussion was continued by other speeches. When a division was about to be organised, a sudden cry of "Police!" brought the proceedings to a close.

SALADE DE SAISON.

[Flower salads are the latest fashion in Paris.]

To be ever in the fashion

With some people is a passion,
And to help them is the object of this
balled,

By directing their attention
To the latest French invention
Gastronomical, the famous Flower Salad.

Tho' to some it may seem silly

To eat salad made of lily—

Picca-lilli is the sort they have a mind for—
There are others who'll devour
Ev'ry kind and sort of flower,
Tho' it's cauliflower they really are inclined
for.

At chrysanthemums and roses
Some may turn up scornful noses,
And decline to eat them even on compul-
sion,

But those who the Fashion follow
A convolvulus will swallow,
Tho' it nearly sends them into a convulsion.

**THE RIGHT SORT.**

Afrikaner (to John Bull). "I DID THINK OF GIVING YOU A SHIP, BUT I'LL MAKE IT THIRTY THOUSAND A YEAR INSTEAD."
John Bull. "THANK YOU, MY BOY! IT'S UNCOMMON HANDSOME OF YOU!"

"IF WISHES WERE HORSES."

"If wishes were horses, beggars would ride."

Ah! that is a proverb my heart endorses.
What stables would Fate for us all provide,
If wishes were horses!

When longing and fancy unite their forces,
In our dreams at least we are "deified,"
Day dreams that are Joy's unfailing sources.

And you and I surely might side by side
O'er the stiffest of Life's cross-country
courses

"Ride, ride together, for ever ride,"
If wishes were horses!

CONFIDENCES.

(Extracted from Mr. Punch's Post-bag.)

III.

DEAR SIR,—I venture to ask your assistance in a most delicate matter. Nothing short of destitution could have caused me to make such an appeal, and I am sure that you will regard it as written in strict confidence.

I am, Sir, a Family Ghost. In the good old days, I did uncommonly well; my work for leading novelists kept me busy through most of the year. But it was in the months of November and December that my best season came, for there was hardly a Christmas number published in which I didn't get a job. Punctually as the last stroke of midnight on Christmas eve faded into silence, I appeared at the heroine's bedside. Beckoning with impressive forefinger, I bade her follow me, and together we passed through the lonely oak corridors of the ancestral mansion. Outside the wind moaned drearily, and the snow fell fast. (I often thought that it must be horribly cold work for the poor girl, but of course that was no business of mine.) Arriving at last at the topmost attic, I pointed to the spot in the wall where a secret spring released the sliding panel. The girl pressed it, and fell forward in a swoon. Next morning she was found there, with a scared face and the Missing Will, which proved, of course, that the ancestral mansion was really the property of her young man. Scores of writers have hired me for this job, and I've always given complete satisfaction. Now and then my line was to terrify the villain and cause him to confess. But for my assistance in this way, the story could never have been ended at all! But I always succeeded; no one ever gave a villain a worse kind of fits than I did. Then I could gibber. Now, it isn't every ghost that can gibber really well, I assure you. Also I may add, that none is better at the clanking-chain business than myself. In fact, I was a ghost whom the public loved, and upon whom the writers felt that they could rely.

Alas! For some reason which I cannot understand, my work has fallen off lamentably of late. Each year for some time past my services have been less in demand, and—strictly between ourselves—this Autumn I have not had a single engagement. Most of the Christmas numbers have already appeared, the rest will follow in a few days, but not one writer in them has offered me a job. Could there be blacker ingratitude for many years of faithful service? There was indeed one exception; a young novelist did ask for my assistance, and though he wasn't by any means a leading man, I agreed to help him through with his story. One can't afford to be particular in these dreadful days.



Governess. "Now, Linsley, you mustn't have any more Plum-Pudding. It'll make you ill!" Linsley. "Never mind, it's worth it!"

Imagine my disgust when, having obtained a post at last, the story was returned to my employer by a brutal editor, with the following insulting note, "No thanks. Spooks are 'off'!" "Spooks are off," indeed! I ask you, Sir, is that a proper way to speak of an old-established and highly respectable ghost like myself?

And so, Sir, I venture to appeal to you. Your sympathetic heart will feel for me; you will pity, I am sure, a spectre who has seen better nights, and is now out of work through no fault of his own. If you can't yourself find a job for me, may I ask you to recommend me to your friends? They won't regret employing me; they will find me as punctual and energetic as ever; and surely the public has not lost all liking for its old favourite?

For obvious reasons, I will not append my name. If, as I trust, you wish to help me, kindly let me wait on you in your office at midnight.

THIS CORRESPONDENCE MUST NOW CEASE.

In vain, O Tailor, you expend
Your penny stamps. In vain you send
Letters persuasive, letters short,
Letters that threaten County Court,
Letters cajoling, that repeat
The old, old "heavy bills to meet";
I tell you, Tailor, 'tis in vain,
I'm down upon my luck again;
Have you none others you can fleece?
This correspondence must now cease.
No longer, MABEL dear, from you
Must I receive these *billets doux*,
No longer must you summon me
To lunch à deux. It must not be.
For now your husband—oh! no doubt
He's bald and middle-aged and stout,
And dull and prosy; still, you see,
You married him and jilted me,
So, to preserve domestic peace,
This correspondence must now cease.



O'Brien. "OH, MURDER ALOIVE! BARNEY, COME AND HELP ME! PAT HAS FALLEN INTO THE MORTAR, AND HE'S UP TO THE ANKLES!"
 McGeorge. "OCH, IF HE'S ONLY UP TO THE ANKLES, HE CAN WALK OUT."
 O'Brien. "OH, BEDAD, BUT HE'S IN HEAD FIRST!"

BACK IN BERLIN.

(By Mr. Punch's Vagrant Contributor.)

WELL, WILLIE, it's jolly to get back home with all your uniforms safe, and the Empress's new Sultan-diamonds, and your white silk dust-cloak (my eye, it was a one-er!): I bet you had done up your moustache and put an extra curl in. When you saw you were really arriving at last, after all the speechifyings and ridings about and all the backacheah-spendings, back again in dear sandy old Berlin. You've had no end of worry, old man (it's so delightful to be familiar with an Emperor even on paper; you don't mind my country manners, do you?), for it isn't all beer and skittles. To knock about in these Eastern countries, and to feed on kabobs and pillaw and every sort of horrible Oriental victuals. I wonder if you smoked a nargilhe, just by way of turning on the right kind of local colour, when you dined with your friend the SULTAN? I did once, only once, and I may tell you (but don't let it go any further: you're a pal, and I tell you things I wouldn't tell anybody else) that I found directly afterwards that my colour was a pale green diversified with a disagreeable kind of dull tan. It wasn't bad, of course, to stand up with your helmet on your head and your sword at your side and your spurs jingling, and to proclaim a message of peace to the universe: Though I admit that the subject is almost too grand and wonderful and suggestive to be spoken of in what I'm half afraid you may possibly call my puny verse. And it's simply topping to assume protectorates over religions and dedicate churches and read lessons and to make outflights (that's German) in Jerusalem and round about it. And to show your imperial countenance to carefully-selected and mildly-demonstrative crowds—my only wonder is, by the way, how they managed to get along all these years and how they're going to get along in future without it—

But the fact is, you see, there were such a lot of crises going on (is that the proper plural of crisis? it doesn't look right, does it?), and there was such a vast amount of botheration in the United States and in Spain, and in France, particularly in France, and in almost every other nation. The Czar, for instance, was busy about his Rescript and was requesting everybody to sign a Disarmament pledge, and he wasn't winking the other eye, but was keeping it open on China. And the French were raving about Major MARCHAND (who was weeping) and the miserable result of all their sly fuses. Devoting to the operation all the energies they could spare from cutting one another's throats on the subject of Captain DREYFUS. And Great Britain was telling France to "git," in a dangerous chorus of *Cave Leonem expegefactum* (you'd scorn to have this translated), and for the rest, we were reckoning up our available navy. And though, of course, properly considered, Emperors are to a mere fighting general as peacocks to the ordinary barn-door bird are, it was just at this time that we burst our lungs in shouting, "Hurrah for the SIRDAR!" So you see, taking one thing with another, the net result is this—it's very unpleasant, but true, Sir (You'll notice how respectful I become when telling an unpleasant truth), that we none of us had a moment to spare for giving a thought to you, Sir. However, I understand, dear WILLIE, that you yourself, in pondering over your recent trip, and on reckoning up the cost of it, Have come to the melancholy conclusion that on the whole the stage was poor, the audience scanty and unappreciative, and that, in fact, to continue this theatrical metaphor, though you did have the leading part, somebody "crabbed" you all the time, with the painful result that you managed to make a frost of it. And the worst of it is that on coming back you found, in spite of all the trouble you had taken, and your dramas and paintings and sermons, That there were all kinds of ructions going on even amongst your own loyal and peaceful Germans. I don't refer to editors, for of course everybody knows that there's only one way to deal with them, and that they always look best as Perpetual convicts in heavy chains—which is what they can generally count on getting for poking fun at you, in other words, for the crime of *laesa majestas*. But there's the Prince of LIPPE DETMOLD; he's a small Prince, of course, but he didn't seem to be funky. For he upped and said to your sacred face that you had been sending him such letters as a man might send to his funkier. And Italy went and made friends with France, and (isn't it a case of *et tu Brute*, Since in firing out Austrian foreigners your ministers only did what they fondly supposed you would say was their duty?) Here's Austria cutting up very rough, and it's plain that you'll have to revise all Your schemes of alliance when Austria threatens a drastic course of reprisal. However, I daresay things will come out all right in the end—they generally do if people can only be persuaded to leave them alone and not keep nagging and worrying; And it's never the slightest use when you've got a long way to go to start on it by breathlessly hurrying—I haven't any doubt at all that SMITH and Müller (I mention these two celebrated men as admirable representatives of our two nations, the British and the Teutonic) Will shortly be shouting together in a chorus which, in spite of poor old SMITH's shortcomings as a songster, they will try to make both harmonious and harmonic. But a word in your ear, my Imperial old Knasterbart, I should like to know if you don't consider that, though it's delightful to roam, Sir, There's more genuine advantage to be got by looking after your folks, which can best be done by staying at home, Sir?

THE "MAILED FIST."—Before this who would not tremble! But its terrors are nothing to the "Blackmailing Fist" which forces the "Blackmailed Fist" to be open-handed and to unwillingly disburse.

AN EVIDENT SEQUITUR.—If France continues her present pin-prick policy, England will end by "getting the needle."

DARBY JONES ON LINGFIELD.

HONOURED SIR,—I trust, like Charon, you are going merrily over the "Sticks." This quip is not mine own, but a Replica of a jape uttered by your friend Sir FRAISER PUNNETT, whom I encountered the day before yesterday in Great Portland Street, filled with a Piscatorial Dish which he had just consumed at a Pagan Eating-house in the immediate neighbourhood. This Delicacy, so the Eminent and Jocose Baronet informed me, is a native of Marseilles, is called Bouillabaisse (I trust that I have the correct caligraphy), was celebrated by the great W. MAKEPEACE THACKERAY in verse, and, as Sir FRAISER declared, "though fishy, will not poison-us" (Anglo-Gallic jest registered by Sir F. P.).

After this *bon mot*, Sir FRAISER (doubtless inspired by the Bouillabaisse in question) asked me, on what racecourse in England a fish-preserve was kept by a Poultryman? Being no Soothsayer with regard to Sphinxes, I was unable to solve the Conundrum, which Sir FRAISER somewhat unfeelingly left me to consider on the muddy side-walk, while he deposited his Exquisitely Varnished Boots in a Hansom Cab.

If there be one Torture, barring the solving of Acrostic Lights, to which I object, it is that of being asked a Riddle without having the Answer supplied, and it may (or may not) grieve your Wilful Wag of a Bart. to know that his Query cost me great consumption of Spirituous Liquor, Soda Water, and Nicotine before I was able to grasp the Solution of his puzzle. The Honourable FLIPLATT was the Solutionist. It appears that he is in the habit of filling in Coupons dealing with the Prizes generously presented by the Proprietors of various Broad-sheets devoted to Sporting Topics to those Erudite Minds capable of fathoming the Deep Sea of Conjecture. The Honourable FLIPLATT, who was compelled to leave Oxford College on account of some Puerile Difference with an Inspector of Police, locally known as a Proctor, and accompanied by Bloodhounds, is one of the Few Men about Piccadilly Circus who was able to point to the Whereabouts of Fashoda at the time that Major MARCHAND was planting Brussels Sprouts in that region. Consequently I was not dumbfounded (or should it be dumb-founded?) when the Honourable explained to me that Sir FRAISER PUNNETT alluded to Lingfield, whereof Mr. FOWLER is the Presiding Genius, "Ling" being a fish, and "Poultryman" a pretty playful allusion to the Secretary of this Popular Meeting. I gave Mr. FLIPLATT an order for "Wonderland" E. in return for his information. It is not my fault if he has been unable to use the Brief.

I like Lingfield because it is conducted on Straight Principles. It has a Straight Mile, a Straight Run from Victoria, and a Straight Management. It is the Kempton Park of Sussex, and if I may trust my knowledge of Equine Contests, the only gathering which has been successfully established on a LEIGH-shore. Captain KRITERION says that Mr. FOWLER is too partial to Policemen, but I take it that he has never looked with Equanimity on the Boys in Blue since he was rather rudely rebuffed, some four years ago, by an Inspector, who could not be persuaded that he possessed an Invitation (left unhappily at home) for the Royal Inclosure at Ascot. Such little Jars often cause a good deal of Bottled-up Wrath. These Lingfield



'INTS ON 'UNTING, BY 'ARRY.

IF OPENING A GATE FOR THE HUNTSMAN, DON'T FALL INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE PACK!

Lyrics may, I trust, be of service to persons less warped in mind than is the Captain:—

The *Hater of Man* with the *Girl Path* I'll choose,
And the *Dramatist* have on my side;
While the *Lad with the Blade* won't refuse,
And the "Earl" a good winner will ride.

The above is a four-leaved Shamrock; the last of this year's crop. Soon I hope to be plucking the Lotus at—but no! I shall have quitted the Empire by—again, no!

We are all Children of the Empire—I am not referring, honoured Sir, to Leicester Square—and I am glad to learn that Mr. SEPTIMUS MILLER, Chairman of the Victorian Racing Club, has been "sent off" by Lord BRASSEY at a Big Banquet to these Shores. Here's grist to him! That SEPTIMUS may be in the Seventh Heaven of Delight during his Sojourn, is the honest desire of

Your peripatetic serf,
DARBY JONES.

POPULAR FOREIGN PLACE OF RESIDENCE
FOR AN ENGLISH DETECTIVE.—Cotch-in-China.

THE SMOKER'S PET BIRD.—The Puffin.

A DILEMMA.

(By a Post who has a strong belief in Leather.)

VENERABLE "trotter-cases"—
Easy, if undignified,
With your pliant mohair laces—
While I fashion still deride,
Daily, weekly, have I worn you
(Butt of every well-shod toff)—
Now the *Lancet* bids me scorn you,
Science cries out, "Taken 'em off!"

On the self-complacent fogey,
Lo! it bends its searchlight stern,
And the dread bacillus bogey
Bids him everywhere discern;
Proves that nothing like old leather
Harbours such malignant germs,
Soles, welts, uppers—all together
It reviles in good set terms.

Dear old friends, then, must I drop you,
While my tortured feet grow numb,
Fling you on one side, or "swop" you
For a pelargonium?
Nay, my well-tried boots, I'll chance it,
Though proud Prudence comfort scorns,
Spite of hygiene and *Lancet*,
Microbes I prefer to coras.



Seedy Provincial Actor. "YOUNG MAN, I HEAR THAT YOU PROPOSE TO ESSAY THE RÔLE OF THE MELANCHOLY DANE. WHAT INDUCED YOU TO DO IT?"
Prosperous London Dillo. "OH, I DON'T KNOW. THEY EGGED ME ON TO IT."
Seedy Provincial Actor. "H'M. THEY EGGED ME OFF!"

THE GREAT UNGAGGED.

["Many who are joining in our *plébiscite* distinctly state that they do not compete for the prize. They merely wish for an opportunity of expressing views which their own journals industriously suppress."—*Daily Mail*.]

THE noble offer made by the *Daily Mail* to compensate with £100 that *bond fide* member of a Liberal Association whose opinions on the question of the future Leadership and Policy of the Party approximate most nearly to the commonplace, has caused Mr. Punch a deal of trouble. His staff has been almost asphyxiated by pressure of correspondence, of which the following letter, taken at a

venture, fairly represents the general tenour; though of the adjoining solutions of the triple enigma each betrays a distinct and poignant individuality.

DEAR MR. PUNCH.—I note that my *Daily Chronicle* is very vexed with the *Daily Mail* for its cynical enterprise; though with customary impartiality it consents to allow a life-size advertisement of the projected *plébiscite* to appear in its own generous columns. Myself, as a True Liberal, I shrink from committing myself in a notoriously Conservative organ. Yet, keen dog that I am, I yearn to throw off the muzzle; to defeat that journalistic conspiracy of silence which has lain like a pall on the still lively corpse of Radi-

calism. But where shall I find a fitting vent for my cooped-up feelings? It is to you I turn; to the one great and untainted medium of Liberal Conservatism; so please find enclosed my answer to the Three Burning Questions:—

1. Who is to be the Leader of the Liberal Party?
 2. What is to be its Policy?
 3. Shall it worry on with Home Rule? Say Yes, or else No.
- You may conceivably offer an overflow prize; but I ask for none; my aims are pure, and here are the answers:—
1. Sir George Newnes, Bart.
 2. (a) One Man, one Tit-Bit.
(b) Bill to encourage Immigrant Aliens (Swiss preferred).
(c) Bill to limit inquiry into their antecedents.
(d) Purification of the Lords by wholesale creation of Liberal Peers.
 3. I can't guess this one.

Yours ever,
A WIDE-WORLDLING.

We take, again at random, a handful of post-cards, all containing intelligent attempts to cope with the great Conundrum of the day.

DROPPINGS FROM A VILLAGE PUMP.

1. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart.
2. (a) Municipalisation of the Great Soda-Water Companies.
(b) *Révision* of the Kitchen Committee.
(c) Local Poptoon.
3. Am doubtful. Fear it might foster consumption of local poteen.

A SPRING-GARDENER SOWS THE GOOD SEED.

1. The Chairman *pro tem.* of the L. C. C. (if Progressive).
2. (a) Compulsory closing of everything always.
(b) Rate-paid housing of Progressive Poor.
(c) Bill to facilitate obstruction by costermongers.
(d) Bill in restraint of short skirts.
3. Yes. Let London pay for it.

MESSAGE FROM A MAYO MARTYR.

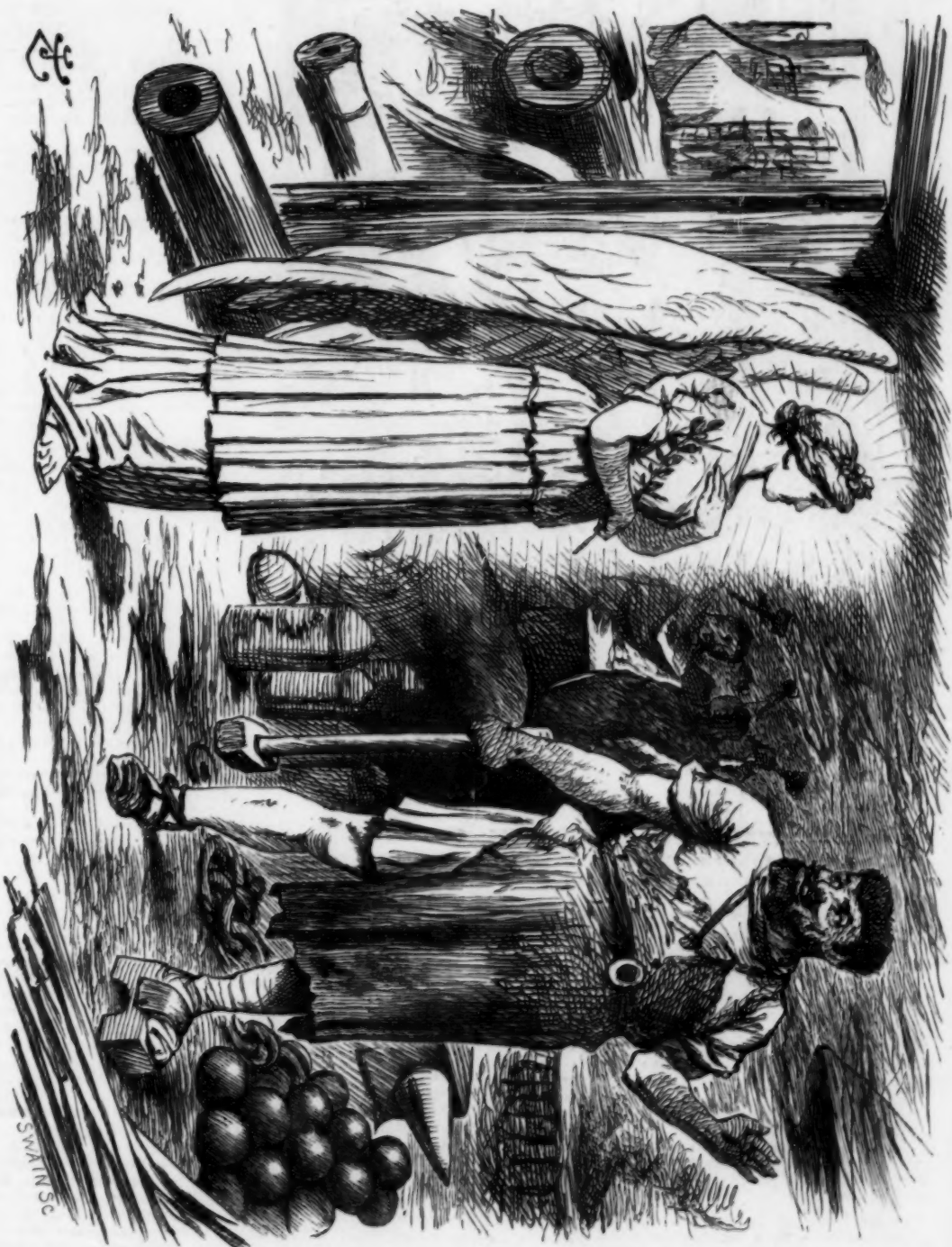
1. Mr. Michael Davitt, M.P.
2. (a) Repeal of *entente cordiale* with United States.
(b) Spirited policy to promote Franco-Irish Alliance.
(c) Bill to amend so-called National Anthem.
(d) Bill to disband Irish Constabulary.
(e) Nationalisation of congested landlords.
3. *Erin-go-bragh!*

A HENT ERA' THE HIELAN'S.

1. The Member for Ross and Cromarty.
2. (a) Bill to regulate the netting of minnows on Rivers Tay and Dee.
(b) Bill to expedite intercourse with the Outer Hebrides.
(c) Bill to prohibit the Member for Fifeshire West (Mr. Augustine Birrell) from making jokes in the House.
(d) Bill to render illegal all jesting in the House.
(e) Other important Scotch measures.
3. Why should Scotland wait?

A LITTLE ENGLANDER'S IDEA.

1. Mr. Henry Labouchere.
2. (a) Abolition of Navy.
(b) Do. Army.
(c) Do. Peerage.



“PIPING TIMES OF PEACE!”

PEACE (to VULCAN). “I SUPPOSE THIS DISARMAMENT PROPOSAL HAS SERIOUSLY INTERFERED WITH YOUR TRADE?”
VULCAN THE ARMOURER. “LOU! BLESS YOU, MISS, NEVER WAS BUSIER! GOT A NICE LITTLE ORDER FROM RUSSIA ONLY THIS MORNING!”

- (d) Abolition of Ground Rents.
 (e) Do. Church.
 3. Yes, if Rosebery says No.

FROM THE QUARTIER ANGLAIS.

1. Sir Edmund Monson.
 2. (a) More New Diplomacy.
 (b) Freedom of Speech at Embassies.
 (c) Anti-pincushion Policy.
 (d) A long-lived Ministry.
 3. Do not feel quite at home on this topic.

A PEER-DIRECTOR WIRES:

1. Mr. Ernest Terah Hooley.
 2. (a) Simplification of Company-promotion.
 (b) Inalienability of Real Estate of Financiers.
 (c) Abolition of Registrars in Bankruptcy.
 (d) Bill for facilitating Purchase of Titles.
 (e) Do. Do. Membership of Political Clubs.
 3. Why not run it as a Syndicate?

A SECRET ADMIRER OF THE "DAILY MAIL" WRITES:

1. Mr. Alfred Harmsworth.
 2. (a) State-aided distribution of certain magazines under cost price.
 (b) Abolition of Book-stall Monopolies.
 (c) Free passes for War-Correspondents to the Front.
 (d) Bill for providing Ministers with Answers at question-time.
 3. Strictly between us, I will say — the thing!

THE JUDGMENT OF MAN.

1. Mr. Hall Caine.
 2. (a) State-directed elevation of the masses by means of literary Masterpieces.
 (b) Bill to distinguish booming from other actionable nuisances.
 (c) Greater profusion of Titles for Men of Letters.
 (d) Bill to restrain W-l-a-n B-r-r-tt from playing the unauthorised Christian.
 (e) Compulsory Manx for the People.
 3. Why not imitate "The Island"?

A FRIEND OF OUR DUMB CREATURES HAS A FANCY.

1. Mr. Toby, M.P.
 2. (a) Introduction of conscience-clause into muzzling legislation.
 (b) Scotland-Yard-aided education of Bloodhounds.
 (c) Bill to facilitate admission of Dogs to Places of Amusement.
 (d) Bill to legalise ground-poaching.
 3. I rather like Irish Terriers.

[N.B.—If any further correspondence of the above type is addressed to this office, it will be at sender's risk.—Ed.]

DRAMATIC CRITIC IN 1832.

How pleasantly nowadays do the most severe dramatic critics phrase their censures in comparison with some of them within the first third of this present century. Looking over some old numbers of *Figaro in London*, we select a few brief notices at haphazard:—

"*Waverley* has been brought out at Covent Garden, and went off amid the snores of a very quietly disposed audience."—October 27, 1832.

Relying on tradition and on the surviving popularity, even to the present day,



LEWIS JAMES

"Oh, Miss Brown, I was so sorry I didn't see you when you called the other day. I had such a dreadful headache, that I had to tell my maid I was not at home to any of my friends. But of course I should have seen you!"

of the music in *Midas*, we had always been under the impression that that piece was in its day a great favourite with everybody. So it might have been with most persons, but not with *Figaro in London*, who in his number for October 6, 1832, says:—

"We forgot last week to notice Miss FERGUSON's appearance as *Apollo* in that heap of trash, *Midas*."
 "That heap of trash"! No mincing phrase there.

In *Figaro* for August 18 the same year is a notice of Mr. KEELEY, whose name is associated, in the recollection of the oldest playgoer (*pace* Mrs. KEELEY, who is still alive and hearty), only with comedy and farce. He is mentioned as—

"enacting *Shylock* (at the Strand) for his own benefit, but certainly not for the benefit of those who witnessed it."

We, not having been either thought of or born at the above date, can only suppose that Mr. KEELEY had not then achieved the exceptionally high position in his profession that he afterwards attained.

The appearance of a French dancer, who

subsequently achieved celebrity as a melodramatic actress, is thus politely and pleasantly described:—

"In bounced Mademoiselle CELESTE, the star of the night, an old woman apparently of about fifty years of age, dressed in a very short blue petticoat. The old lady capered away for some minutes with a force frightfully muscular," &c., &c., "while she occasionally gave a spin of such endurance that at the moment one might have fancied her the top of her profession."

Then follows what in these more delicate times would have most certainly brought down on both Proprietor and Editor an action for libel; but as we have not come across any subsequent allusion to such a very natural consequence, it follows that the professionals of those days did not consider themselves injured by this style of attack, and so the *Figaro* continued its bitterly satirical course through the years of what may be termed "the terribly plain-speaking thirties."

BEVERAGE FOR A MUNCIPAL.—Thorough Bass.



PARLIAMENTARY CONSTELLATIONS.

(After the projection of Monomachus Ambassadorius.)

But it would seem that the failure of the meteoric display in the heavens, which should have come off in November, has been redressed by the large increase in the coruscation of eloquence which has been flashed upon appreciative audiences, urban bucolic, throughout the provinces of our native land. Not only the greater and more luminous components of the constellation which rules the destinies of England, but also the minor members of the stellar system, have been emitting beams of more than ordinary brilliancy, and dazzling observers by their unwonted radiance. —Sir E. Monson's Paris Speech.



Mistress. "DID MRS. BROWN SAY ANYTHING WHEN YOU TOLD HER I WAS OUT?"

Maid. "YES, 'M. MRS. BROWN, MUM, SAID, 'THANK HEAVEN!' 'MUM."

"IN THE BAY OF BISCAY—OH!"

(Extracts from the Travel Diary of Toby, M.P.; First.)

P. and O. Mail Steamer "Peninsular," Monday.—The exclamation in the headline must not be regarded as one of pain. It rather indicates pleased surprise. Bay of Biscay is the bad dog of ocean pathways. Has got a bad name; might as well hang it—which, I believe, passengers crossing it occasionally do. Have personal experience that confirms general prejudice. Coming home from India, found the Bay inconveniently elated at our (so far) safe return. Tossed its arms aloft in wild delight of welcome. Recklessly threw up its cap,—many caps, all white, with glistening green trimmings. Well meant, but a little embarrassing; provocative of absence from meals.

A year after, met in a London club a man who warmly shook me by the hand. "Haven't seen you since," he said.

"No," I answered, dubiously. (Nothing offends a man so much as being forgotten.)

"Rather rough time, wasn't it?"

"Something terrible," I said, shuddering. (Fancy we must have met in a snow-storm.)

"You remember how she rolled?"

"Most extraordinary!" I said. (What it was she had rolled floored me. Must have been her eyes.)

"Nice fellow, the captain. Ever seen him since?"

Now I knew where we had foregathered. It was on the voyage home from Bombay. But many fellows on board. Which was this?

Just then my friend, sitting in low arm-chair in smoking-room, crossed his legs, placing sole of right foot in full view. Instantly recognised him. He was Captain VAN TROMP of the 30th. Joined us at Marseilles. Ship unusually full; every one going round by sea; room found for new-comers only by pulling table adrift and lengthening it by placing chairs in interstice. All well till we got into Bay. High jinks there. VAN TROMP sat nearly opposite me; when ship gave unusually heavy lurch his chair went backward, he with it, feet in the air. In course of a few meals I got rather more familiar with the soles of his feet than with the aspect of his countenance. Hence recognition

in the club smoking-room. Odd, I know; but strange things happen at sea.

Tuesday.—To-day the Bay is nearly as smooth as the Serpentine; infinitely more beautiful. Blue above; blue below; with soft breeze belying the almanac that swears it's November. Cheerful to find the right thing done. Folks going to the Riviera usually take train to Marseilles; a bad passage across the Channel; hurried, costly journey by *train de luxe*, which usually breaks down soon after leaving Paris, enforcing hasty change into ordinary carriage. Why not go to Marseilles by P. and O.? Usually plenty of room; best berths available; travellers for India, lingering over farewells, catch up the ship at Marseilles or Brindisi. Going round by sea makes all the journey holiday; comfortable berth; good food; cheerful company if you want it, and when you don't, a deck-chair and a book, with glimpses over the top of the page of the blue Atlantic.

Reading to-day *The Castle Inn*, STANLEY WEYMAN's last story. A picturesque study of England one hundred and thirty years ago. Much struck with the ingenuity and variety of the ramifications of the plot. The practised reader sees from the first how it will all end, but is constantly surprised by the blind alleys into which the author artlessly leads him. No hare with the hounds in full cry ever made such unexpected turns as does this rattling story.

Wednesday.—Worst of life on board ship is that you become unwillingly privy to confidences next door. Last night heard a female voice saying, "Steward, if there's any danger in the night, will you come and call me?" "Yes, Ma'am," said the practical-minded steward.

Out of the Bay of Biscay now, skirting the rock-bound coast of Portugal; in the sunlight it takes on a hue of rosy-brown; charming framework for the azure blue of the sea, flecked with white foam. Once out of the malignant Biscayan Bay, the Atlantic certainly becomes a little lively. Scarcely worth mentioning; allude to it merely by way of introducing a new game I—or rather the Atlantic—invented. Think of calling it "The Bay of Biscay Billiards." Not that the Bay, strictly speaking, had anything to do with the conception. But in case of wide advertising, apt alliteration's artful aid is useful.

The process is simple. Take, as the cookery-books say, two



"HOW'S THAT, UMPIRE?"

Golf Player. "NOW THEN, WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING AT, BOY? DON'T YOU KNOW WHERE THE BALL IS?"

Caddie. "YUS, SIR. I KNOW, SIR. PLEASE, SIR, THAT THERE DUN COW 'VE SWALLERED IT!"

oranges; serve them on a plate placed on a camp-stool by the side of your berth. The steamer rolling to starboard pitches the camp-stool over; smashes the plate; sends the oranges flying under the opposite berth. Now the game begins, and is worth watching. When the ship rolls to port the oranges come along exactly as billiard-balls, stricken by a well-directed cue, course the green baize cloth. Crossing and recrossing, they make cannons with a neatness and surety that would make FRED ROBERTS—especially if he's not a good sailor—green with envy.

On this board there's only one pocket. That is the narrow passage between two portmanteaus under the berth. It is a difficult stroke. But the Atlantic wasn't born yesterday. In one break he pocketed both balls.

Regarded as a parlour game this has the disadvantage of requiring, to begin with, an ocean and a roomy berth in a liner. But the idea may be adapted. There is at least no harm in throwing it out.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

How can a Lever need a lift? It is we who are lifted by a Lever, and the heavier we feel, and the more "down" we are, the greater force will be required, and there must be plenty of Levers ready at hand. The supply of Leverage is to be obtained *chez* DOWNEY & Co., whose excellent edition of all CHARLES LEVER's works is now complete in twenty-seven volumes. Looking through them, the Baron comes to the conclusion that if no other writer, taking up the same line as did CHARLES LEVER, could even rival him, so CHARLES LEVER could not beat such inimitable works of his own creation as *Jack Hinton*, *Charles O'Malley*, *The Knight of Gwynne*, *Harry Lorrequer*, and *Tom Burke of Ours*. But all of them are well worth a shelf among "Our Noble Shelves" in any well-found library.

Major ARTHUR GRIFFITHS, author of *Mysteries of Police and Crime* (CASSELL & Co.), the "safe bind safe find" man, who, as one of H.M. Inspectors of Prisons, has had unusual opportunities for collecting the materials which, in book-form, might be described as a "Drawing-room edition of the *Newgate Calendar* for delicate readers." Not that he minces matters to any great extent: "Bowdlerism" is not his line; but he so narrates the most unpleasant stories of most abominable crimes as to render them insidiously palatable to polite taste. It is almost impossible to read through the Major's two volumes at a sitting; though, by the way, one work of his, an Edgar-Allan-Poe-ish kind of story, *The Night Express*, you must read at a sitting, even if

the dinner-hour has to be postponed; but of these stories you can select here one and there one, making up a parcel of six at a sitting. When the Baron was a boy, did he not revel in AINSWORTH's *Dick Turpin* (who never accomplished that wonderful feat of riding to York on *Black Bess*) in the same author's *Jack Sheppard*, and in BULWER LYTTON's *Claude Duval*? Major GRIFFITHS gives some information concerning one WILLIAM PARSONS, Esq., the son of a Nottinghamshire Bart., which will be of considerable interest to all Etonians, especially to those "Old Boys" who may still remember the "Montem," which gave its last performance about half a century ago, on which occasion Etonians in fancy costumes used to stop the coaches and carriages on the King's Highway and demand "salt" (money in any form) from the occupants. Such a custom was an admirable preparation for any lad with a natural turn for "the road," as had WILLIAM PARSONS, who, commencing with petty thefts at Eton, finished "per varios casus, per tot (dis)crimina" at Tyburn. *Barry Lyndon* was not "in it" with this amiable Etonian. In "Upper School" are preserved busts of the Etonian Worthies. Why not set apart some hitherto unused room beneath the Lowest Class Room of the Lower School for the Eton Unworthies, and commence with WILLIAM PARSONS? Also let there be started an Eton "Chamber of Horrors," in which should be kept old blocks, old "swishes," and any instruments of torture used in the darkest days. GRIFFITHS Major's two volumes are most fascinatingly and absorbingly interesting.

The Baron strongly recommends Mr. WILLIAM J. LOCKE's *Idols* (JOHN LANE) to all novel readers. It is well written; no time is wasted in superfluous descriptions; there is no fine writing for fine writing's sake; but the story, the general probability of which is not to any appreciable extent discounted by two improbabilities, will absorb the reader. At all events, it is a novel that, once taken up, cannot willingly be put down until finished.

THE BARON DE B.-W.

THE NEW DIPLOMACY.

(From a Single-sided Point of View.)

SCENE—A room in a Government Office. Enter an Officer.

Officer. Will you please let me see the confidential report on my regimental conduct?

Official. With the greatest pleasure. The novel system is to tell everything to everybody. (Hands papers.)

Officer (after a hurried perusal). Thank you, so much. And now to have it out with my Colonel! [Exit.

SCENE—Editorial Sanctum. Enter Would-be Contributor.

Would-be Contributor. And you like my article?

Editor (with enthusiasm). My dear friend, it is a long way the best thing I have read in my life!

Would-be C. And yet you refuse to insert it! Do you mind giving me the reason why?

Editor. Not in the least. We like to be free-spoken and above-board. The reason why we can't insert it is because you speak disparagingly of a man who married a second cousin twice removed of one of our principal supporters. That will never do, my dear fellow; that would never do!

Would-be C. Oh, indeed! Then I will tell the story in the columns of a rival newspaper! [Exit.

SCENE—Offices of a Club. Enter Aggrieved Member.

Aggrieved Member. I want to know why my friend, Mr. JONES, was pilled? I don't want to embarrass you, but can you give me any information?

Secretary. Only too pleased. The latest idea is to have no secrets. The fact is, one of the committee got his colleagues to blackball him. He said any friend of yours must be an unsuitable person.

A. M. Oh, indeed! And do you mind telling me the name of the member?

Sec. With pleasure. Mr. SMITH.

A. M. I am infinitely obliged to you. And now to my lawyers to commence an action for slander against SMITH! [Exit.

SCENE—A Bank Parlour. Enter a Respected Customer.

Respected Customer. Of course, I don't want you to be indiscreet, but is the bank shaky?

Manager. Only too delighted to afford any information in my power. It is the new system. Fact is, the bank is very shaky indeed.

R. C. A thousand thanks! And now to fill in a blank cheque with the amount of my balance, and then to my stockbroker to sell for the fall! [Exit.

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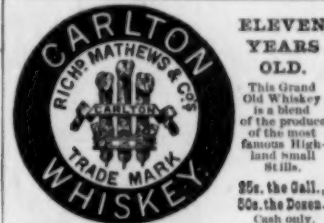
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